



**FLOURISHING
OCEANS**

Project

THE GLOBAL FISHING INDEX

National/Global



Overfishing – driven by poor management, illegal and destructive fishing and an ever-expanding fishing fleet – threatens ecosystem health, fisheries sustainability, human rights, food security and livelihoods.

In response to this crisis, global leaders set a target to effectively regulate harvesting, end overfishing and restore stocks to biologically sustainable levels by 2020 (Sustainable Development Goal target 14.4). However, we are still far from achieving this goal, and many fisheries continue to operate with little oversight – making it impossible to measure, monitor or manage fisheries towards this outcome.

The Global Fishing Index (the GFI) addresses this gap by providing the most comprehensive assessment of the state of marine fisheries to date. A world-first assessment of the governance and sustainability of fisheries in 142 coastal states, the GFI uncovers critical gaps leading to overfishing and calls on governments and businesses to declare their intent and demonstrate action to reverse fish population decline.

Photo credit: Christian Aslund / EyeEm via Getty Images.

Key findings

Urgent action is needed to achieve sustainability goals, including SDG target 14.4.

1. Almost half of assessed fish stocks are overfished – and nearly 1 in 10 have been driven to collapse.
2. Over half of the global catch is from fish stocks that lack sufficient data to determine if they are sustainable or not.
3. Collectively, countries are not delivering against global sustainability commitments.
4. The majority of countries are not applying science-based management in most of their fisheries.
5. Despite their importance in enabling effective fisheries management, vital stakeholders, including local fishing communities, are unable to effectively participate in management and decision-making processes.

Calls to action

We call on governments, businesses and local communities to:

1. **Set ambitious targets to restore fish stocks and follow through with management actions.** Governments and businesses need to set strong, time-bound and measurable targets to improve management and restore fish stocks to sustainable levels.
2. **Establish systems to collect and publish fisheries data.** Establish and expand data collection programs and work to integrate other types of information, including local stakeholder knowledge, into decision-making.
3. **Embed evidence in fisheries management, using a precautionary approach where uncertainty is high.** Adopt evidence-based management measures and strategies, such as catch and/or effort limits and harvest control rules, in all fisheries.



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Recommendations

Governments

- **Address the worst problems first** – including overfishing or unassessed stocks and critical governance gaps.
- **Adopt evidence-based policies** that promote sustainable fishing.
- **Invest in improving fisheries management** – explore what has been successful elsewhere and work to adapt and replicate to meet local needs.

Fishing and seafood businesses

Audit your supply chain and require full disclosure about fishing practices and activities from your source companies and vessels.

- **Shift sourcing** towards suppliers that show commitment to and progress towards sustainable fishing practices and management.
- **Advocate for, fund and implement policies** that will increase the sustainability of fisheries in your supply chain.

Local fishing communities

- **Drive innovation** of fit-for-purpose solutions for your fisheries.
- **Push for policy change**, individually or as part of a cooperative or fisher association.
- **Collaborate with scientists, managers and other groups** to identify and mitigate threats to local fish stocks and ecosystems.

Consumers

- **Get informed** – learn about where your seafood comes from, who caught it and whether it's sustainable or not.
- **Press for change** – urge government and industry leaders to take action to improve the state of fisheries.
- **Consume consciously** – where possible, opt to purchase only seafood that is sustainable and well managed.

For more information on methods and country-level results, visit globalfishingindex.org or scan the QR below.

